Fellowship in Prayer

"For a world united in prayer"

Lord of all enlightenment
Open up our hearts that they may allow
The passage of thy light upon our path
Which thus becomes thy way and all mankind's
So that we walk, and do not stumble.

-- *A. E. Johnson.*

Volume IX June, 1958 Number 3

OUR PURPOSE

"To promote the practice of prayer among *all* religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind."

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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Volume IX June, 1958 Number 3

Harmony, Melody, and Beauty

When individuals know and understand beauty - everywhere - evil thoughts and so-called sin will tempt them less or not at all. Beautiful manifestations will fill their minds and exclude all other conditions. This is no idle dream. We are taught that the Master lived a perfect life, not free from temptation but free from yielding to it. I believe that His mind was so full of visions of beauty there was no room for discord, evil, error, or sin.

Perhaps I can better describe a mind free of impurity by telling the effects of music, harmony, and melody. When one's whole being is under the spell of wonderful music there is no room for discord.

Music demonstrates fulfillment of intellectual desires; emotions are stirred and sentiments are uplifting and exalting.

Discord, strife, and mental quirks break down the effects of great music; beauty is erased.

Music has the essential elements of both harmony and melody, but they are not lost as the last note fades; they remain in memory. It is also true that harmony and melody are not confined to music alone, they are everywhere. Wherever one finds beauty, there harmony and melody may be found also.

If one fails to find harmony and melody along the pathways of life, it is because one's heart, mind, and soul are filled with ideals of smaller values, or one's vision is clouded by mists of doubt or fear. Fragrance is not a rose. Faith is not vision. To have and to hold fragrance of flowers, or faith and vision, we must always recognize harmony and melody in all things beautiful - everywhere.

Beauty is universal and eternal, it is free to all of us who seek it steadfastly.

-- Wallace Tibbetts.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

By Swami Ritajananda

All theistic religions accept the idea that God is all-perfect, Pure Spirit, incomprehensible to the ordinary human being. Yet we read in the scriptures how God created the world, how He rules it and maintains a moral order. Many people believe that those who lead a virtuous life here will go to Heaven, the abode of God, and enjoy the bliss of His company for all eternity. Such faith in Heaven as a reward for earthly virtue is universally a part of religious life.

In their details the concepts of Heaven vary from religion to religion, but all agree that life there is passed in the presence of God, in an abode of joy devoid of all suffering. In addition, humanity accepts the idea that God is the invisible Controller of events and by praying to Him we can get strength to help shape their course. From ancient times people have prayed for protection from enemies and calamities. Some even believe that Heaven is not outside the world at all but that, with the help of God, it can be brought to the earth.

Life on earth we know to be a mixture of good and evil, and from the study of history we find that man was never free from evil. Various reasons have been ascribed to its existence. Some people believe it is due to the power of Satan; others say it is a part of the nature of creation itself. In any case, man longs to see evil vanquished and, indeed, all imperfections wiped out; he envisions a state of perfection in which there is no suffering, no poverty, and no wars; and he believes, or hopes, that such a state of unalloyed happiness and prosperity will come some time in the future.

As to how it will come, beliefs vary. Some people, in both East and West, believe that God will incarnate as a man once again to destroy evil and establish everlasting righteousness. Where He will incarnate, and when, how He will act, are matters for speculation. Others say that in the meantime it is our duty to make ourselves and the world fit for His coming by our own good conduct.

There are others who believe that by his conquest of environment, by his own efforts, man can make a heaven on earth without seeking the help of an unseen power. They say that

the knowledge man has gained in many different fields is sufficient to create a well-ordered universe, a "heaven on earth," a world where everybody will be free from want, disease and suffering. Although such a state of perfection is not visible at present in our imagination we can create such a world. We can construct an ideal picture in which there is no wickedness, no hatred, no evil of any kind; we can visualize the peoples of the earth all sharing each other's joys and sorrows; we can hope that by encouraging a highly ethical life in ourselves and in others we may achieve this heaven on earth. If human nature is such that it can be conditioned by outside forces alone, we may look forward to a peaceful world—if not now, at least in the future. This is the view of materialism.

Unfortunately, humanity has never really tried to accomplish this and in actual practice we do not see any signs of this dream coming to pass. The great prophets whom we revere as way-showers for humanity seem never to have talked this way. The most celebrated of them, Christ and Buddha, declared that their kingdom was not of this world. All of them believed in a Kingdom of God, but not of this earth, despite the fact that they were undoubtedly the most humane of men, the most interested in the welfare of their fellow beings.

Why is this? The answer is that they had a view of truth greater than we ordinary mortals have. They had a more profound understanding of human nature and its various levels of evolution and they asserted, over and over again, that the Kingdom of God is to be sought only from within. Instead of working on the material plane, they said that we are to work for the Kingdom of God on the spiritual plane. And though they also wanted to establish God's Kingdom on earth, they did not believe that peace and joy are products of economic welfare and social organization. Instead of laying foundations on these materialistic ideals, they wanted the foundations laid in human hearts.

They saw that people everywhere are at the mercy of their likes and dislikes, their rooted habits, their ingrained sense of self; that ordinary human nature is too fragile to support the burden of a great ideal. But as earth when converted into bricks can be made to construct huge buildings, they wanted people to make themselves fit for the establishment of God's Kingdom. This is the transforma-

tion in our inner life that we expect through the help of our religions. Unless we are purified in mind and heart, and make ourselves completely like children under the guidance of God, we can never really bring a change in the world.

So there is the fundamental need of perfecting oneself before trying to perfect the world. The great world-movers, those who have inspired millions to regenerate their lives and live with compassion toward others, have been those who first perfected themselves. It is through the limitless power of prayer made in faith that we wash off our impurities and imperfections. Then, and then only, shall we cease to look on erring people with an attitude of superiority and condescension.

The famous Hindu scripture, the *Bhagavad Gita*, states that when a person reaches such a state of perfection he develops a tremendous new insight into life, he begins actually to see the presence of the Lord all around him. It adds that those who consecrate all their actions to the Lord, regarding Him as the Supreme Goal, who worship Him, and meditate on Him with single-minded concentration—to them He becomes the Saviour. Only such people can bring lasting peace on earth. They understand that they are only the instruments of the Lord, that it is the Lord alone—not man—who can build His Kingdom. In the end we see that our duty is to lift our hands in prayer and humbly say:

"Lord, Thy will be done."

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TRANSFORMED MIND

The day resembled prison bars
  Which held my heart confined;
While Heaven soared beyond my grasp
  And God escaped my mind.

But purposely I stilled my thought
  And found a spot so bright
God's radiance melted prison walls
  And left me clothed in light.

-- *Mildred Long.*

ILLUMINATION

By Harry Halsey Starrett

What the world needs today more than anything else is *ILLUMINATION*.

All of man's troubles are the fruits of ignorance, and ignorance is darkness. Man's only hope, therefore, and the only hope of the world lies in the enlightenment, the ennoblement and the spiritual advancement of the individual, the world being the individual in the aggregate.

May we all pray without ceasing that "The Light that lighteth the world"—the Light which is the Living Christ—may descend upon the earth, flooding the lives of all the peoples of the earth, that they may see all things in the Light of Truth. It is only through TRUTH that man finds freedom and it is only in freedom that we can become "good and faithful servants" in the service of God, for the extension of His Kingdom on earth, "that His will may be done on earth as it is done in heaven." It is only through the surrender of our will to the will of God that we can live and move in harmony with God's intelligent, just, irrevocable, and eternal plan. It is only through a reunion with God that we can gain Eternal Life and become an uplifting force in the world, when we can say with Christ, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Herein we find the highest attainment in life. To labor, in God's vineyard, for the redemption of souls, is to glorify God and to glorify God is the fulfillment of The Law.

When God created the universe, His first command was "Let there be light." So may this first and greatest command of the Creator reverberate from our souls as a prayer for deliverance from the darkness of ignorance. May this Eternal Light flow through us into the lives of all who come in our presence, as we journey along life's highway, and may this first and greatest command of God, which brought all things into being, echo and re-echo from the depths of our souls, now and throughout all eternity.

May we all walk in the footsteps of the Master Who said, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

"Prayer clears the vision, strengthens purpose, sweetens the spirit, fortifies the soul."

WHEN PRAYER IS POWER

By G. Roy Bragg

"Lord, teach us how to pray...."

Much that Jesus did and said will never be known. The Gospels are priceless, but at best they are fragmentary accounts. The Evangelists could not be expected to record everything. But one thing they made very clear, and that is the important place that prayer played in the life of our Lord. Furthermore, His prayer was the kind that brought power. He prayed often and everywhere, when He was on the mountain top, also when He was in the valley. Always the results were the same, a receiving of new power. He was transfigured before them. Even when the stark reality of Calvary's cross completely blocked His road,he prayed His way through. Faith overcame fear, confience replaced questioning, and new strength and courage turned the despair of dark into eternal day. When the Disciples saw the power of such prayer it is no wonder that they cried out, "Lord, teach us how to pray."

When we study Jesus at prayer, and when we see his countenance changed by its regenerative power, our hearts and minds echo the same deep longings of the Disciples. For we know from experience that in order to meet the continual demands of life, we stand in desperate need of some help greater than our own. We work, hold conferences and plan, but in our most difficult moments we are thoroughly convinced that our own feverish efforts are inadequate. We need some comforting, reassuring and empowering force such as Jesus received from prayer. This does not mean that we seek prayer as a substitute for our own dedicated efforts. Work and prayer are supplementary. Life needs both. One Canadian university challenges its students with this motto, "Ora et Labora," work and pray. It is a wise combination. We should work as though everything depended upon us and pray as though everything depended upon God. For as Jesus made clear, prayer is divine power which supplements our thoughts and efforts and enables us to move toward the goal of our greatest life potential, as God intended.

Unfortunately, we do not always see prayer in this light. Too often, while we readily acknowledge the fruit of good works, we are not nearly as acquiescent in ac-

knowledging the power of prayer. Sometimes in the name of psychology, an attempt is made to explain prayer away as a matter of auto-suggestion. At other times the pragmatic argument is advanced—'prayer doesn't work.' And there are other criticisms to tempt a wavering faith. But the great impartial thinkers of every age have declared themselves differently. Thomas Carlyle echoes the sentiment of some of the greatest minds of literature when he declares, "Prayer is and remains the native and deepest impulse of the soul of man." William James, an authority for psychology, says, "we pray because we cannot help praying." Martin Luther speaks for the multitudes of believers who have experienced prayer as their indespensable daily spiritual bread. He testifies convincingly, "I have so much work to do today, I could not possibly get it done without two or three hours of prayer." Last but greatest, is the changed countenance of our Lord, His unconquerable strength and courage at Gethsemane and Calvary and His ultimate victory over despair and death. These are facts of experience which even the empiricist must recognize. Here is evidence of regenerative power which any plan for the betterment of mankind and his world must ultimately include.

There are some things about prayer that we may never understand, but this should not deprive us of its power. A similar statement could be made of electricity and other great ministries to man. We may never be able to explain the technique of prayer in a one-two-three order as we would some scientific formulae, and if we refuse to pray until we can explain it, we may never know the power of prayer. But if we look and learn from the Christ and those who faithfully followed Him into the garden of prayer, if we accept what we find and exercise even a little faith, we will invariably experience its regenerative power more convincingly than all the proof and arguments in the world. The story of the old New England sea captain is apropos. A sophisticate challenged him about the composition of the wind. "Do you know of what the wind is made?"asked the critic. "No, replied the old captain, "But I do know how to set my sails in such a way that I use its power to take me wherever I want to go." That is the kind of knowledge effective prayer requires, recognition that prayer is a great redemptive power, power not of our own

making, but which we may appropriate when we bring our lives within the orb of its influence.

We do this when we learn from Jesus. We see that effective prayer in the last analysis depends more upon how we live than our understanding of any technique or form of articulation.

In her book, TO LIVE AGAIN, Catherine Marshall gives repeated testimonies to the power of prayer. When she was preparing to film her biography of Dr. Peter Marshall, A MAN CALLED PETER, she was anxious that the picture be a continuation of the preaching and ministry of her consecrated husband. She was grateful for the technical skills of the Hollywood experts, but she felt the need of something more, namely, the power of prayer. So she mailed 1800 letters to men and women of various walks of life, requesting their prayers that the picture might speak to the heart of America in the name of the Christ. The response of one man to her request is a revelation. He intimated that his prayers would not be of any help since he could not get God to answer when he prayed for himself. Perhaps unwittingly this man placed his finger on the weak spot in his own prayer practice and in a great many of our prayers. Too often our prayers are ineffective because they are self-centered rather than God-centered. A little boy was asked by his minister, "Son, do you say your prayers every night?" "No," replied the youngster candidly, "Some nights I don't want anything."

We don't learn such selfishness from Jesus. He never prayed especially or exclusively for Himself.

Prayer loses its power when used as an instrument of self-promotion or when we beg God to reaffirm our prejudices instead of enlightening our minds. A closed mind is a shut-valve to any power of God.

Blind insistence upon our own selfish way can never produce power because it is not in the true spirit of Christian prayer. We pray, not in order to make God do and think as we do, but rather to be brought into such relationship with Him that God may do for us, to us and through us, the things which coincide with His will.

Again Jesus makes clear that prayer is power only when our relationship with others is right. In the Sermon on the Mount, He emphasizes the importance of relationships to one another. He reminds us that if a man is on his way to the altar for prayer - to

talk with God - and he remembers a difference with his brother, his first duty is to be reconciled with his brother and afterward he may approach God and say his prayers. We are not likely to feel right when talking with God until we have right thoughts and attitudes toward one another. Any attempt at prayer would be mock piety, an embarrassment to ourselves and blasphemy to God. For God loves us. He expects us to love Him in return. But how can we love God whom we have not seen when we do not love our brother whom we have seen?

Prayer is power only when we have an unshakeable faith such as Jesus had in God, the Father. Jesus had a glorious confidence in the Father to whom He prayed. In moments of greatest difficulty and doubt, when life appeared to be on the verge of toppling, Jesus had the answer. The Eternal God was His refuge and underneath were the everlasting arms. And He rested upon that faith and received strength for His deeds. Jesus had moments of grief, as when He said, "Now is my soul sorrowful even unto death." But again His unshakeable faith in God sustained Him as he assured Himself with a reminder from His spiritual heritage, " They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength...."

Likewise, in moments of loneliness Jesus was comforted by the continual awareness of God's abiding presence. When Peter denied Him, Judas betrayed Him, and the others forsook Him, He knew God as a never-failing friend and cried out triumphantly, "I am not alone, the Father is with me."

Prayer can be power - comforting, assuring, rejuvenating - only when we pray as Jesus prayed. But in order to pray like Him, we must endeavor to live as He lived, making our efforts and thoughts God-centered rather than self-centered, our relations with others in the spirit of love, and our faith firm in a God Who is always sufficient.

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Prayer from the Holy Qur'an—

"Our Lord! let not our hearts now deviate, after Thou hast guided us, but grant us mercy from Thine own Presence, for Thou art the Grantor of bounties without measure. Our Lord: Thou art He that will gather mankind together against a Day about which there is no doubt; for God never fails in His promise." *(Sura 3, V. 8-9).* *Quoted by S. R. Shafaq, Tehran.*

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PRAYER AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

By. W. J. Thompson, D.D.

A story that never would have been divulged was revealed when someone questioned the President's religious sincerity. Stepping unannounced into the President's office one morning, a member of the Cabinet found the Chief Executive on his knees in prayer. The official apologized profusely for his intrusion, but President Eisenhower quietly waved his apology aside. The President explained that he was making a crucial decision that could mean peace or war in the Far East, and he was praying for Divine Guidance.

All through his life Dwight D. Eisenhower has believed in and made use of prayer. He opens Cabinet meetings with prayer. His belief in prayer is rooted in years of experience, and he genuinely feels that his prayers have been answered many times.

When he was sixteen, blood poisoning developed in his left leg. It began to spread, and doctors urged amputation, saying it was "his leg or his life." But young Dwight did not agree! Instead, the whole family prayed. "Only a miracle will save his leg," said the doctors. Three weeks later he was able to walk on two sound legs. This incident deeply impressed the future President of the United States and strengthened his conviction concerning the power of prayer.

Years later, in July, 1943, he turned to that Divine Power, seeking a miracle. It was the zero hour for the assault on Sicily. Alone, the Allied Commander went to a high point overlooking Malta. It was a critical hour. Carefully-laid plans called for coordinating action between air-borne and water-borne troops moving against battle-hardened enemies. Suddenly an adverse wind sprang up which could ruin his planes, and he watched the ships push off in the moonlight. His hand was raised in salute, then he dropped to his knees and prayed for help. The wind changed in direction and the assault was successful. Again he felt that prayer had been answered.

The President believes that religion and prayer are necessary if a nation is to survive. He uses prayer in the campaign he wages for peace, and one of his most cherished hopes is that the people of the United States will take a vital interest in religion. He is convinced that prayer is the supreme privilege, and the greatest power in the world.

LEADERSHIP AND SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE

The Archbishop of Paris recently urged the French people to pray for an end to the present crisis. Cardinal Feltin is reported to have said in a moving sermon at crowded Notre Dame Cathedral:

"In these dramatic circumstances, Christians must pray for God to enlighten the leaders and citizens in order to establish and maintain peace."

We are reminded of further timely admonition by a leader in the Roman Catholic faith, Father James Keller, founder of the Christophers, in the Foreword of JUST FOR TODAY:

"We in America have a rich heritage that stems from a profound belief in God. It is our conviction that it would not take too much effort to focus attention on it once again - to bring it back into the forefront of American life, to make it live as a positive dynamic force in public and private affairs.

"Over a hundred years ago the sage DeTocqueville wrote the following interesting comment, '...The Americans combine the notions of Christianity and liberty so intimately in their minds that it is impossible to make them conceive the one without the other.'"

In an address before the Military Chaplains Association of the U.S.A., Secretary of State John Foster Dulles said recently:

"I do not believe that human nature throughout the world has greatly changed from what it was when 'the great American experiment' in freedom caught the imagination of men everywhere. I am afraid that the fault, if any, may be here at home in that we ourselves have lost track of the close connection between our faith and our works and that we attempt to justify our society and to make it appealing without regard to the spiritual concepts which underlie it and make it work. So many material things have been added unto us that what originally were secondary byproducts now seem to rank as primary. And if material things are to be made primary, then it is logical to have a materialistic creed that justifies this primacy.

"Woodrow Wilson, shortly before he died, wrote of the challenge of the doctrines and practices of communism. He concluded:

'The sum of the whole matter is this, that our civilization cannot survive materially unless it be redeemed spiritually....Here is the final chal-

(Continued on page 14)

SONGS ALONG THE WAY

Many of our readers have expressed appreciation for the prayers of Theodore Carswell Hume which we have been privileged to reprint from the eloquent interpretation of his life, "Flight to Destiny." Now, through the generosity of his mother, we have received a book of poems by his father, Edward H. Hume, the beloved physician whose notable career in India and China included the presidency of the Colleges of Yale-in-China.

The Foreword to this book, "Songs Along the Way," offers inspiring glimpses of a unique personality who, in the midst of a life devoted to alleviating human ills, found time to voice his gratitude for the eternal verities. "Because he never ceased to wonder at the beauty and harmony of life," we are told, "it was natural that Edward Hume should write poems. Each day's experience was a fresh gift to be savoured, not rendered stale by indifference or heaviness of spirit, but accepted eagerly by his optimistic and trusting nature.... At times his feelings flowed into poetry as the response of a grateful heart....They were spontaneous lines, written on a scrap of paper, in a notebook on a journey, or on the flyleaf of a book....That he chose poetry as his way of expression was as natural to him as talking to a friend. From earliest childhood he lived always where people spoke to each other in more than one language....In China he listened and repeated aloud the lilting tones of the language. He looked, as their own scholars did, for subtle meanings woven into the pattern of words....His life was spent in bringing healing into areas of life where human suffering was great. In China and in India there was poverty, famine, and disease; in medicine there were always the shadows of pain, fear, and despair. These poems are but another token of a life which reveals that, 'The light is still shining in the darkness, for the darkness has never put it out.'"

The scope of Dr. Hume's interests is indicated by the titles of a few of his verses: "At the Symphony Concert in Shanghai;" "If Flowers Could Speak;" "After Receiving Letters from Home;" "What is Distance?" One poem in particular expresses the author's feeling for poetry, and it is reprinted with the kind permission of Mrs. Hume.

A BOOK OF VERSE *By Edward H. Hume*

THOUGH MADE BY FOOLS LIKE ME

A poem is a bridge that spans the stream
Of human life. Across its vibrant way
Pass messengers who carry many a dream
Of inner longing, brought to light of day.

A poem is a spirit plane that flies
With weighty cargo, high o'er clouds and sea
Of human separateness and distance. It defies
The pull of earth and soars exultingly.

A poem is a lightning flash across the dark,
A storm of rain, a tropic hurricane,
Whose sweeping onrush is th' unfailing mark
By which one learns a wounded spirit's pain.

A poem is a gentle breeze that blows
Across the spirit's garden. Fragrance sweet
Of many flowers it carries. He who knows
Its influence grows more gracious, more complete.

* * *

Leafing through this collection, we gain deeper insight into the rich heritage of faith which is apparent in the worship materials of Dr. Hume's distinguished son. The following excerpt from Theodore Hume's writing, which is reprinted from "Flight to Destiny," provides further evidence of the guiding spirit in the work of this father and son:

"One of the solemn rites performed in ancient Greece was that which centered about the Astrologos.

"When a young man had finished his early schooling and was about to leave his home for the first time, to set forth on life's journey, the family gathered around, and a sacred tablet - the Astrologos - was broken in two. One piece was given to the son - the other, kept by the father, placed with a prayer upon the family altar. For years the son might wander, into distant lands, across perilous seas. After five, ten, or twenty

years he would return, bearded and battered, scarred with the marks of battle or the strains of life. But in his hand he would bring his half of the Astrologos, and, fitting it into the other half, held by his father, he would prove - to himself and to the world - that the tides had brought him home.

"But every one of you holds also a Tablet - deep down in your soul - a broken Tablet, with rough and jagged edges, it may be - that sometimes cuts your conscience and bruises your pride.

"You will go through life (perhaps for years without knowing it) trying to make it fit, now here, now there. Happy will you be when you discover, with the certainty of personal experience (after suffering a disappointment) that the other half of your Tablet is held in a loving hand of one we can all call 'Our Father.'"

* * *

Our appreciation is extended to Mrs. Hume for the opportunity to publish these excerpts as well as for permission to reprint further quotations in future issues of FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER.

LEADERSHIP AND SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE

(Continued from page 11)

lenge to our churches, to our political organizations, and to our capitalists—to everyone who fears God or loves his country.'"

Governor G. Mennen Williams of Michigan said recently, "We cannot defeat the forces of communism in the world arena just by re-establishing the strongest military forces on the face of the earth, nor can we defeat communism with our vast material wealth alone ...What is needed is a spiritual counter-force. I believe that counter-force can be found in the deep dedication of the vast majority of our people to the concepts of liberty, justice and freedom under law for all mankind.... We are surrounded by a world of people, most of whom have been ground down for centuries by poverty, hunger and disease, and discrimination.... They want to cast aside their chains of undernourishment, underdevelopment, and enforced inequality. They want their place in the sun, and they are determined to have it."

Our prayers follow the leaders of this nation, who, like Governor Williams, endeavor to stress the need of a spiritual awakening in overcoming world problems.

COMMUNION WITH GOD

By Rabbi Myron B. Movsky

Judaism demands of each of us: study and action, Ma' aseh and Talmud, regarding both of them as means for communion with God. We regard this demand for Study and Practice not as one to be fulfilled only by a small professional group, who may be Jews for the rest of us. Each one of us must devote part of his day to Jewish thought and the Jewish mode of communion with God.

There may be those who feel that they can live quite happily without either religious discipline or communion with God. But they are in grave error. The restlessness which characterizes us, the confusion which has come on our times, the increasing percentage of neuroses among us, and the general unhappiness of all of us in the midst of the greatest affluence the world has yet seen, has come upon us primarily because of the lack of that sense of communion with God which made our forefathers happy in spite of their poverty and their physical suffering. We resemble most closely those little children who, not having yet learned to interpret the symptoms of weariness and hunger, cry when bedtime or mealtime comes, and yet refuse either to go to bed or take their food. Living in a gilded palace, as it were, we are still miserable, for we are essentially orphans, having lost that most precious of all values in life, the sense of the Fatherhood of God.

The feeling of deprivation grows sharper and more poignant, instead of less severe, as we grow older. The time comes to each of us when the burdens of life seem far too heavy to carry, when the brightness of youth begins to fade, and we notice the lengthening shadows which presage our end.

Then more than ever do we become homesick; homesick, not for our houses or for our countries, but homesick for the universal Parent of all of us, for that deep affection which is the heart of the universe itself, for the mercy of God. Yet a wall of iron has been placed between us and Him, and we cannot find Him. What greater good can man achieve, either for himself or for the world, than to contribute his effort to piercing this wall, and bringing the Father and the children once more into loving communion with one another!

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THE PROBLEM OF WORRY

By Roy Wallace Thomas

The chief foe of human happiness, we are often told, is fear or worry. Observation and experience corroborate this idea. The power of fear is evident in a primitive practice in the Fiji Islands, of "praying" a man to death. The sorcerers tell a native that he will die when the green sprouts, which they place in a piece of bamboo, grow and burst the bamboo. When that occurs, the victim dies of fear brought on by suggestion, which paralyzes the subtle vital processes.

Love has a contrary effect. Working through faith, love creates confidence at the center of the self, quickens the very processes that fear would strangle, and enables the self to flower in achievement. Fear causes failure. Love, faith and hope fulfill the self and create true happiness. A psychiatrist has been quoted as saying that the healthy person is one who can obey Jesus' commandments of Love. "Perfect love casts out fear." Fear is powerful, but love is more powerful.

There are reasonable fears and there are unreasonable fears. It is sensible to fear disease and to seek a cure; to fear ignorance and to seek an education. It is reasonable to fear to touch a charged wire, to drink poison, or to cross a street against the traffic light. But worry is unnatural and harmful.

Worry is a habit of mind in which fear gnaws at one's vitals—fear of failure, illness, breakdown, poverty. Worry wastes energy, dams up the energies of the body. Medical experts tell us worry may shorten life. Every function of the personality is affected by worry.

The worrier becomes expert by practice. He "looks through a glass darkly." He wallows in unpleasant ideas, which engender unpleasant moods. He keeps himself miserable and makes a wretched companion. He maintains an emotional tension that keeps him depressed and disturbed. His appetite diminishes, his fatigue increases, he loses sleep.

Since the habits of worry root deep in the subconscious self, a man cannot rid himself of worry quickly by declaring, "I will not worry." Nor can he be cured by the command, "Don't worry." He spent much time in forging the chains that bind him, and it will take time to uncoil or break them.

The babe, say the psychologists, is born with only two fears: the fear of noise and the fear of falling. All other fears are acquired. Since worry is learned by practice, it can be unlearned by practice. This was the core of Jesus' method when he gave as the key to his peace: "Learn of me."

The cure for worry is both a learning and a forgetting. To learn is to acquire ideas and to develop the techniques for expressing and carrying them out. Ideas release emotion and emotion is energy. Pleasant ideas stimulate mental and physical health. Painful thoughts speed up a damaging flow of energy, for energy that is unused becomes destructive.

We learn by practice. "This do," said Jesus again and again. In learning, the scientists tell us, the nerve cells and fibers grow larger by repeated use just as the muscles grow larger from exercise. In forgetting, which is lack of use, the nerve cells and fibers return to their former size. Learning, by keeping the nerve cells active, makes the new habit easy. But forgetting has the opposite effect.

Habits, including the habit of worry, may be lost by forgetting, by lack of practice. "Remember Lot's wife," warned Jesus. She refused to go forward into the land of beginning again. She could not forget the old life. One help in the cure of worry is to forget, "forgetting those things which are behind," such as unpleasantness, failure, disappointment, but never forgetting the lesson in the experience. It is also good to remember that the sensitivity which makes worry possible is the mark of a fine personality capable of high achievement. Worry is an abuse of basic sensitivity.

It is good, therefore, to replace the habit of worry by good habits, "reaching forth unto those things which are before." These new habits of faith and cheerfulness are also formed by practice. The worrier now turns his attention to the good that overcomes evil, to the love that casts out fear, to the faith that gives security. He substitutes ideas of strength, courage, success, for ideas of weakness and defeat that brought him low. The will is strengthened by directing the attention to the beautiful, the good and the true. Said Paul, "think on these things." Despite the evil in the world, there *is* beauty, goodness and truth in abudance, all of which we may enjoy and to which we may contribute our portion when we are proficient in the art of

living.

The worrier should remove the causes of worry whenever possible. Sometimes one may find a way to escape irritations. While certain undesirable circumstances may be changed, unfortunately others cannot be changed. In such cases one's happiness will depend upon adjusting oneself to what cannot be changed. A man may suffer from an accident or an incurable disease. Often it is necessary to maintain dealings with unpleasant people. In such situations the cure for worry is within one's mind.

Paul could not, even by prayer, rid himself of his "thorn in the flesh," but he could adjust himself to it. He could change himself. He could build adequate inner defense. Whatever his thorn was, prayer gave him strength to endure it, and to keep at work. For every "dead-end road," God opened a better opportunity in another direction.

A friend has told me of her "thorn in the flesh." She can not remember of ever being free of a persistent headache for which physicians have not found a cure. Yet she is a lovely mother and joins her husband in providing a splendid home for their two fine young sons. She is one of the most helpful workers in her church, and in other worthwhile groups. Her victory is due to her faith in prayer.

Of course it is never good sense in the face of evil to do nothing when something can be done about it. A few years ago my wife discovered that she was growing blind. Her physician and her optometrist seemed to offer no hope. We were greatly worried. One day she received a letter from an old-fashioned Christian friend who wrote: "I hear you are going blind. You must accept it as God's will. He will give you grace to bear it." My wife could not believe that it was God's will. She turned to other servants of God in the ministry of healing. She found a certain opthalmologist who gave her reason for hope. He operated on both eyes and today she has good vision. But had she heeded the pietistic pessimism of her well-meaning friend, she would now be blind. It is good sense to be certain as to what is God's will.

The number of people who battle with worry is legion. I inherited such a trait from both sides of my ancestry, but my father and mother had inherited the same tendency. Fortunately for me, before I reached middle age the book and magazine shelves, also the daily press, became full of most helpful materials from

preacher and psychologist on how to face worry. Here are a few of the suggestions that have helped me:

A man should discuss his troubles with no one except his minister, physician, or an understanding friend.

Associate with cheerful companions who have worthwhile interests. Quietly share their joys and hopes, and never live for yourself alone.

Be interested in your work. If circumstance forces you to earn your livelihood by labor that is distasteful, choose hobbies that engage your creative talent, together with the kinds of recreation that relax you. Such hobbies are healing.

Avoid self-pity, yet be gentle with yourself, but firm. You cannot find relief from stress by violently pulling on your bootstraps. The creative forces work gently. The violent forces are destructive.

Relax by enjoying your favorite type of literature, dramas, movie or music. The Bible contains the quintessense of practical wisdom. It is full of ideas of strength. It helps to remember that an idea of weakness diminishes one's strength by two-thirds, while an inspiring idea increases energy by one-half

Never give way to defeat but always say," With God's help I can and will." Be patient since all the creative processes work patiently as expressions of the Creator's will. The roaring stream at flood heaves destructive boulders down the mountain side, causing desolation in the heart of the forest, while the unseen vital forces working quietly and gently nearby create giants of fir and spruce.

Many victims of the forces resistant to life have found help by writing out their new aims and reading them over often. The ETUDE once carried the story of a student of voice who was urged by a famous teacher to turn to another profession, since singing was not for him. This advice made the young man very despondent. One day he entered a store and by chance saw the word " confidence " printed on some advertising blotters. He knew that God had given him a voice and the capacity for hard work. All he now needed was confidence. He picked up a handful of the blotters, took them to his room, cut out the word " confidence" from each and pasted it on everything he used from hairbrush to chair and desk. He became a Metropolitan Opera star.

At the top of the list of all cures for worry is religion. Jesus demonstrated the

way to victorious poise. The story of his life shows plainly how to be fruitfully active, yet divinely tranquil, amidst all the wear and tear of busy existence. Out of his own calm experience of God he gently urged, "DO NOT WORRY ABOUT LIFE!" *(Matthew 6:25, Goodspeed's translation.)*

SUCH PEOPLE

It's hard to pray for people when
They seem incorrigibly mean,
Who, when forgiven, sin again
And re-enact the same old scene.

But what about misdeeds I've done,
And might be doing as before
If friends, by praying, had not won
For me an urge to sin no more?

And I remember how our Lord,
While being crucified to death,
For his tormentors could afford
To pray with almost his last breath.

So I must pray for these folks still,
Recalling what's been done for me,
And trusting that such people will
From sin obsession be set free!

-- *Ralph S. Thorn.*

oooOooo

The Habit of Prayer

I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. *Psalm 34:1*

"The prayer instinct never leaves a man but too often it becomes dormant from disuse. Then when a crisis comes and the impulse to pray is upon him, he learns the hard lesson of an undeveloped talent.

THERE IS NOTHING UNUSUAL or even reprehensible about lacking the desire to pray. It is encouraging to the rest of us to know that most of the great saints were not always at a high pitch of devotion and often felt what is called "dryness" of soul. One's needs and circumstances vary from day

to day, and so do one's moods. God knows this even better than do we.

What is important is praying whether we desire to or not. That is, alas, the chief difference between the great saints and ourselves. For prayer is above all else a habit, a skill, an acquired capacity which grows with practice. Just as the violinist practices whether he feels like it or not, disciplining himself and his moods day in and day out, so must we if we would learn to pray. The desire to pray may be rudimentary in all of us as an inherent gift from God, but we must cultivate it ourselves." *Selected*

Randolph Ray, D. D.

We are indebted to Dr. Randolph Ray who, in the midst of activities incident to his retirement as rector of the famous "Little Church Around the Corner," found time to send us these selections from his office across the street.

It is good to know that Dr. Ray will, as rector emeritus, continue to work for the beloved church and thus remain a part of this neighborhood which has been blessed with his benign influence through thirty-five years.

oooOooo

WE COUNT ON YOU

May we take this opportunity to thank those loyal subscribers who have told us that there will be no relaxing of efforts to spread the news of our work? Chance acquaintanceship during travels or in one's own community has often revealed undreamed-of opportunities. One subscriber in Ohio has told us of his distribution of FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER at an Arbor Day gathering, and of other plans to increase interest in our cause while attending Grange and other meetings. We court the cooperation of all of you toward this end, and look forward to receiving many requests for extra copies of this issue for distribution. Many subscribers distribute copies to libraries and hospitals. We are glad to fill requests for copies of recent issues to be used in this way. *(See page 23 for rates.)*

APPRECIATION

We are deeply grateful to our Contributing Editors who have cooperated so loyally and promptly in response to our appeal for special articles for this issue.

Appreciation and welcome are extended as well to new contributors of articles:

Rabbi Myron B. Movsky, of the Shaare Zedek Congregation, Lima, Ohio, for his illuminating comments on "Communion with God;" and the Rev. G. Roy Bragg, of Metropolitan-Duane Methodist Church, New York City, for his inspiring thoughts on "When Prayer is Power." We know that our readers will share our hope that we may have the privilege of reading further contributions from these religious leaders.

It is a pleasure to offer additional thanks for the inspiring Prayer on our front cover by Prof. A. E. Johnson, and the following helpful material from writers of prose and verse:

HARMONY, MELODY, AND BEAUTY *By Wallace Tibbetts.*

THE HABIT OF PRAYER *By Dr. Randolph Ray.*

TRANSFORMED MIND (verse) *By Mildred Long.*

MY PRAYER *By Annette Victoria.*
(Sent by Mildred Seydell).

Announcing—

A FELLOWSHIP ADVISOR

We announce with especial pleasure that the name of Karl Frey has been added to our list of advisors in the central zone.

A fellow townsman and friend of our contributing editor, Harry Halsey Starrett, in Lima, Ohio, Mr. Frey finds many opportunities during an active business career, for participation in religious and civic activities. He has the firm belief that true living consists not in getting, but in giving, and he puts his belief into daily practice which benefits his fellow men. His enthusiastic efforts in behalf of Fellowship in Prayer have resulted in numerous additions to our list of readers. It is heartening to receive such constant evidence of unfailing support. Each advisor possesses some special talent which fits into our need. As Fellowship in Prayer grows in influence and character we know it is due to the cooperation of friends and the Spirit of God.

We warmly welcome Mr. Frey!

NOTICES and COMMENTS

ANNOUNCING OUR NEW ASSOCIATE EDITOR. After six months of helpful service in our office, Mrs. Cornelia S. Mills left to answer a call which had a greater claim on her assistance. Though we continue to admire her for her keen sense of loyalty and responsibility, though we know her interest in and support of the cause of prayer will continue, we are nevertheless sorry to lose her active daily participation.

After the departure of Mrs. Mills, the weight of burdensome toil had been at times heavy and might have been too severe had not Miss Flora Horton, a retired librarian, come forth to offer help. The many hours of completely voluntary service in the office have more than deserved not only the lasting gratitude of the Executive Secretary, but also that of the entire Board of Trustees of Fellowship in Prayer.

There was still need to search for someone to fill the vacancy left by Mrs. Mills. After the concerted prayer on our part and on the part of numerous friends we were led to discover Miss Bertha W. Smith, who has been living in the close neighborhood of our office. Beginning with the present issue, June, 1958, Miss Smith is our part-time Associate Editor. Her long publishing and editorial experience — e.g., several years with the Atlantic Monthly, and as executive editor of The Writer — is now part of our asset.

Since we count heavily on our advisors, contributors and readers for the selected messages to be relayed through our publication, the volume of correspondence is likely to increase rapidly with time. Even though Miss Smith will generously carry a part of the load, we may soon be in need of more help. Please remember this in your prayers for us.

FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER. This issue will reach our readers just as June ushers in the summer season with its opportunities for leisure, travel, and many outdoor activities. We hope it may be a time of rest and spiritual refreshment for all.

Fellowship in Prayer is maintained by voluntary contributions which are tax exempt. The publication is printed bimonthly and the subscription rate is $2.00 per year. Back copies are available for free distribution at the rate of two cents per copy to defray the postage.

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oooOooo

MY PRAYER

Please help me Lord, to cherish sacred things:
Help me to keep a child's deep trust in me,
Teach me to listen when a robin sings,
To watch a spider weave its artistry.
Give me the keys that will unlock the hearts
Of all I meet, please help me understand
Ways not my own that fill their daily charts,
Encourage me to offer them my hand.
Show me the grace of sparrows in the snow,
Help me to teach my children gold is cold,
That what can be replaced has little glow
And only gentle deeds wear well when old;
Remind me, Peace will be a dream come true,
When men follow the Star that leads to You.

. . . Annette Victorin
(Sent by Mildred Seydell)

✠

Fellowship in Prayer
22 East 29th Street
New York 16, N. Y.

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